

employment tax withholding when the stock is purchased.

While I am pleased that the IRS currently has in place a moratorium so that no employment taxes will be assessed on stock options, I believe Congress needs to clarify existing law to prevent any future attempts to change past policy on stock options. The current moratorium extends until January 1, 2003, and unless Congress adopts the proposed legislation, companies and workers will face uncertainty as to whether options are subject to withholding taxes.

The legislation I am introducing would clarify that the difference between the exercise price and the fair market value of stock offered by the Incentive Stock Option or Employee Stock Purchase Plan is excluded from employment taxes. In addition, wage withholding is not required on disqualifying dispositions of Incentive Stock Option stock or on the fifteen percent discount offered to employees by Employee Stock Purchase Plans.

I urge my colleagues to join me in cosponsoring this legislation.

CLOSE FINGER LAKES NATIONAL FOREST TO DRILLING

HON. JAMES T. WALSH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

Mr. WALSH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in opposition to proposals to drill for natural gas within the Finger Lakes National Forest located in Hector, New York between Seneca and Cayuga Lakes. This proposed drilling will have catastrophic effects on wildlife, recreation in the area, and tourism vital to the region's economy.

The Finger Lakes National Forest is the smallest national forest in the country and draws 46,000 recreational visitors each year who hunt, fish, camp, and hike on the 16,000-plus acre reserve. Any drilling in national parks, including the proposed drilling in the Finger Lakes National Forest which would utilize 130 foot rigs and pipelines, will cause irreparable damage to the landscape and environment.

Recently, my office has been flooded with letters from concerned neighbors across Upstate New York. I have referred their correspondence to Dale Bosworth, Chief of the United States Forest Service, to be included as part of the record on this issue.

In addition, I have expressed my concern to Congressman CALLAHAN, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development. I encourage Mr. CALLAHAN and my fellow Appropriations Committee colleagues to support language recently added to an accompanying Senate Appropriations bill that would ban all oil and natural gas exploration in the forest. Our House Energy and Water Development conferees have the ability to retain the Senate version's language when the spending package is considered in conference later this year.

My father, former Rep. William F. Walsh, represented this area in Congress in the 1970's. During that time, he fought hard to en-

sure this pristine wilderness area would be protected for future generations. In our current attempts to construct a sound and responsible national energy policy, it is my hope that this body recognizes the need for continued environmental stewardship to protect these national treasures for the generations that follow.

I urge my fellow members to support my call to ban drilling in the Finger Lakes National Forest.

RECOGNIZING AN OUTSTANDING FRIENDSHIP AND PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN TWO CITIES, IRWINDALE, CA, AND SALVATIERRA, GUANAJUATO, MEXICO

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an international friendship that began many years, has withstood the test of time and continues to grow as each year passes.

The Sister City Partnership between the City of Irwindale, California, in the 31st Congressional District and the City of Salvatierra, Guanajuato, Mexico, began 36 years ago. Through this partnership, both communities have realized cultural and humanitarian benefits.

For example, the City of Salvatierra has received donations from Irwindale of much-needed equipment such as a fire engine, ambulance, street sweeper and optical instruments to improve the quality of life for its citizens.

In addition, Irwindale has experienced firsthand the benefits of cultural exchange and good will through the bi-annual visits of its residents to Mexico. In fact, a local park in Salvatierra, Mexico, was named after the City of Irwindale.

I am privileged to recognize these two exemplary cities, Irwindale and Salvatierra, for their friendship and exchanges that benefit residents in both cities.

CONGRATULATIONS TO COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, August 1, 2001

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, the Council of Khalistan, led by my friend Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, recently completed 15 years of service and I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Council of Khalistan. Dr. Aulakh is a well-known presence around here. He has been working these halls for 15 years, advocating the cause of freedom for the Sikhs of Punjab, Khalistan, who are being subjected to brutal tyranny by the Indian government.

The Sikhs and other minorities like the Christians, Muslims, Dalit "untouchables," and others have been killed by the tens of thousands, held as political prisoners in large num-

bers—over 52,000 Sikhs alone, according to a recent report from the Movement Against State Repression—and subjected to other atrocities like violent attacks on religious institutions like Christian churches and schools, the Golden Temple, and the Babri mosque, attempts to burn down a Gurdwara and some houses, the Staines murder. In the face of these atrocities democratic India does nothing.

It is because of the efforts of activists like Dr. Aulakh that these matters come to light. He is a major leader in the human-rights movement and the leader of the Sikh community. I salute him for his tireless efforts and submit the following articles.

CONCERN AT NEW THREATS TO RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

[The following statement was issued in New Delhi and Hyderabad on Sunday, 29th July 2000 by All India Christian Council President Dr Joseph D'Souza and Secretary General John Dayal in the wake of reports of draconian changes in the Foreign Contributions regulation act, the Private members Bill in the Lok Sabha against freedom of faith, the incidence of Vishwa Hindu Parishad goons "arresting" Christian workers in Varanasi, the forcible "re-conversion" of Orissa Christians under the combined pressure of the VHP and the Orissa Police.]

The All India Christian Council calls upon Civil Society, the national Human Rights Commission and fellow citizens to take united action to counter a series of recent incidents in several Indian states by Fundamentalists extremists of the Sangh Parivar, as well as by police forces acting at their behest, in which the civil rights of Christian individuals and groups have been violently attacked. The Council is deeply concerned that the central and state governments, instead of taking urgent steps to restore confidence among the terrorised minorities, have seemingly condoned such actions. The Centre is in fact, according to media reports, bringing forward legislation that will further and more seriously affect religious minorities in the country and their work, and injure Constitutional guarantees.

The Council has declared it will extend all legal assistance to the victims who have been terrorised, specially in the states of Orissa, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

The most ominous incident has taken place in Varanasi in the state of Uttar Pradesh, where the state government controlled by the Bharatiya Janata party has condoned military training with firearms provided to elements of the Sangh Parivar in recent months. In that city on 24th July 2001, a Christian religious worker was among five persons "detained" by self styled vigilantes of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. The five men had come to the city to attend a meeting. The City Superintendent of Police, who had the five men released, admitted they were innocent of the charges of conversion levied against them. The police have however taken no action against the VHP goons who terrorised the Christian group.

VHP groups are also terrorising the inmates of an ashram in Kota district of Rajasthan which is home to over 1,500 destitute and orphaned young people from various parts of the country. Death threats have been made against Bishop M A Thomas and officials of the Ashram. Many other similar cases have been reported from other states.

In Orissa, ruled by a coalition in which the BJP is a partner, the police have looked on while Tribal Christians are being coerced